



# Keeping Up With Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center

Since 1984, Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center (AMHC), a not-for-profit group of resident-volunteers, has supported Alexandrians with mental disabilities and their families through advocacy, education and fundraising to meet social, vocational and emergency needs.

SPRING 2011 FUND DRIVE

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alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa/friends

## Who We Are

Friends is a 501(c)(3) volunteer organization. Friends supports clients of the Community Services Board (CSB). The CSB oversees the City's publicly funded services for Alexandrians with mental illness, intellectual disability or a substance dependency. CSB programs are implemented by the City's Department of Community and Human Services. Visit [alexandriava.gov/mhidsa](http://alexandriava.gov/mhidsa) for more information.

Friends also supports community education projects with the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria, special activities for CSB consumers, and supplemental equipment and furnishings for CSB residential facilities.

## The People We Serve

Nearly 90% of the over 5,105 Alexandrians served by the CSB last year have annual family incomes under \$25,000. Alexandrians of all ages receive mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services. Of the CSB's clients, 24% are children aged 0-19.

## How Donations Are Used

Friends helps CSB clients whose needs fall between the cracks or threaten their recovery. Examples include:

- Emergency assistance for rent and utilities
- Medical and dental care and prescriptions
- Clothing, food
- Security deposits for housing
- Educational programs

## Friends Hopes To Expand Community Support *Spring 2 ACTION* - May 5, 6 & 7

Friends of the AMHC is excited to participate in Alexandria's first *Spring 2 ACTION*, an innovative, online, all-community fundraising event created by the Alexandria Community Trust (ACT). Coinciding with our City's annual "Spring for Alexandria" event this May, *Spring 2 ACTION* will feature a website created especially for ACT by Razoo, an internet company that has assisted with fundraising campaigns across the country. For three days, May 5, 6, & 7, Alexandrians will be able to use this central portal to donate to more than 30 Alexandria non-profits that provide a wide range of services to our City's residents.

ACT Program Director Brandi Yee writes, "We hope to inspire unprecedented levels of charitable giving during this campaign and have created incentives to make the campaign fun. For example, ACT will award prizes to random donors and contribute an additional \$100 to the non-profit receiving that donor's contribution. A non-profit receiving the most number of unique donors can end up on the 'Leader Board' and could win \$1,500, \$2,500, \$5,000 or other prizes."

Friends of the AMHC is delighted to participate in this opportunity and hopes to introduce itself and its mission to a wider audience. You can help Alexandria strengthen its non-profit community by spreading the word about *Spring 2 ACTION* to your family, friends, and colleagues. For more information about the campaign, and to make an online donation to Friends of the AMHC on May 5, 6 & 7, go to [www.Spring2ACTION.org](http://www.Spring2ACTION.org).

## Art Exhibit to Open for Mental Health Month Opening Reception - May 12, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m. at Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria

Please join Friends for the opening reception of "Art Uniting People – Celebrating Creativity and Mental Health," a special exhibit featuring the artwork of Northern Virginians whose lives have been affected by mental illness, substance dependency disorders, and intellectual disabilities. Former U.S. Representative Patrick Kennedy will attend the reception and speak about mental illness, and dancers from the Rhythm of Hope Dance Company of the National Rehabilitation & Rediscovery Foundation will perform in the Lee Center auditorium. Light refreshments provided by Alexandria Whole Foods Market and Best Buns will be served.

The Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria, the Alexandria Community Services Board, the Alexandria Arts Commission, the Alexandria Office on the Arts and the Department of Recreation's Office of Therapeutic Recreation have encouraged artists of all ages to show their work. Some clients of the mental health center have had the opportunity to create pieces for the exhibition at art workshops. All of the artists have been invited to share the inspiration behind their work or to tell their personal story by placing a statement by their artwork.

The goal of this exhibit is to provide the artists as well as their family members and caregivers the opportunity to use art as a form of expression to engage the community in a conversation about mental health. Artists and viewers will have an opportunity to discuss the artwork and recognize universal feelings, thereby reducing the stigma often associated with mental disorders. Please join us for this free event. Your attendance will make it a memorable occasion for all.



Guest speaker Patrick Kennedy.

## Donations Foster Recovery

Your contributions to Friends provide immediate assistance when emergencies or special needs arise in the lives of individuals receiving mental health services from the Community Services Board. Here are examples of how Friends’ donors have made a difference this winter:

*A client of Substance Abuse Services was eager to secure employment and had been actively seeking a job. She believed her lack of success was partially due to her appearance since she had no teeth. Friends gave her the last dollars she needed for dentures so she could continue to strive for her goal with heightened self-esteem and confidence.*

*A gentleman receiving Older Adult Clinical Services had been diagnosed with Hepatitis C. His doctor recommended vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B to prevent further infection, but his insurance would not pay for it. Friends paid for the inoculations.*

*A young woman receiving support from Mental Health Outpatient Services needed rent money when her work hours were reduced due to her pregnancy. This need became more critical as she attempted to remove herself from an abusive partner who had contributed to her financial support. Friends joined forces with the Old Presbyterian Meeting House to help with her rent payment. The woman will resume her work hours after the baby is born.*

In addition to seeking donations from community members for needs like those described above, Friends would like to explore new sources of support such as matching grants, bequests, and fund-raising parties. Currently we are trying to connect with area businesses, local philanthropic groups, fraternal organizations, and social clubs. If you know any groups or individuals who could help us, please contact Dan Sweeney at [dlsweeney@comcast.net](mailto:dlsweeney@comcast.net). We welcome your ideas, guidance or participation!

## Spring Newsletter Honorees

Donations to Friends were made in memory of Keri Elgin, Morton Langstaff and Bruce Thompson, and in honor of Greg Moore.

We would also like to honor and thank two foundations. The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth provides funding through Friends for two of the CSB’s youth substance abuse prevention programs. The Mason Hirst Foundation, Inc. of ACT for Alexandria provides financial support to assist Friends in achieving its mission. We are deeply grateful to these organizations.

## Pass It On: “People-First” Language Reduces Stigma

This following information is from [www.hogg.utexas.edu/initiatives/language\\_matters](http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/initiatives/language_matters).

We have a choice in the words we use to describe ourselves, others and the world around us. These choices have a powerful effect on how we view mental health and people with mental health conditions. People-first language always puts the person first before the mental health condition to demonstrate his or her dignity and worth. A person’s mental health is only one aspect of who the person is. If the information doesn’t contribute to the topic in a necessary or meaningful way, why mention it at all? If the information is important, put others first in the sentence. For example, instead of calling someone “mentally ill,” the more appropriate, respectful phrase is “a person with a mental illness”.

<u>Labels</u>	<u>People First Language</u>	<u>Labels</u>	<u>People First Language</u>
Crazy	She has a mental health condition (or diagnosis)	Emotionally disturbed	He has an emotional disturbance
Psycho			
Insane			
Lunatic			
Mentally ill			
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Normal	He doesn't have a mental health condition (or diagnosis)	Special Ed student	She receives special education services
Sane			
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	She has:	Addict	He has a substance use disorder or addiction
Schizophrenic	Schizophrenia	Substance Abuser	
Anorexic	Anorexia		
Depressive	Major depression		
Obsessive-Compulsive	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder		

### Consider a Donation

Please make your check payable to Friends of the AMHC and mail to Friends, 720 N. Saint Asaph St., Alexandria, VA 22314. You will receive a receipt. Help us be green by including your email address.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of or in honor of someone, include a note with your contribution.

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